



# Buddhist Council of Victoria

Representing and serving the Buddhist community in Victoria

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## The Protocol on Organ Donation

1. Buddhists may elect to have their organs and/or tissues donated after death is medically determined.
2. A potential donor must have identified themselves during their lifetime or advised their family that they wished to donate.
3. Some Buddhists require a period of at least eight hours of chanting near the body before the organs are removed. This requirement must be respected.
4. The doctor who is taking the organs should say out loud to the deceased person that they are fulfilling their vow made in their lifetime to donate the organs.
5. A deceased person must be handled gently and with respect.
6. It is recognised that living donors may be subject to exploitation and that this is unethical.
7. Living donors must have a bill of rights and an advocate to determine that they are not being exploited.
8. Living donors must receive the same standard of medical care as recipients to minimise harm.

At the Annual General Meeting of 2020, the BCV adopted the above Protocol on Organ Donation with agreement from Ven. Thich Phuoc Tan, Abbot of the Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook, then President of the Buddhist Council of Victoria, Former President of the Australian Sangha Association

**This Protocol was reaffirmed by President Dinesh Weerakkody in 2023 and add the following texts;**

*Dana*, giving, is extolled in the Pali canon as a great virtue. It is, in fact, the beginning of the path to liberation. When the Buddha preaches to a newcomer, he starts his graduated sermon with an exposition on the virtues of giving (*danakatha*, Vin.i,15,18). Of the three bases for the performance of meritorious deeds (*punnakiriyavatthu*), giving is the first, the other two being virtue and mental culture (A.iv,241). It is also the first of the ten *paramita* perfected by a Buddha. Therefore, on the march towards liberation as an arahant or a Buddha, one initially has to practice *dana*.

Giving is of prime importance in the Buddhist scheme of mental purification because it is the best weapon against greed (*lobha*), the first of the three unwholesome motivational roots (*akusalamula*). Greed is wrapped up with egoism and selfishness since we hold our personalities and possessions as "I" and "mine". Giving helps make egoism thaw: it is the antidote to cure the illness of egoism and greed. "Overcome the taint of greed and practice giving," exhorts the Devatasamyutta (S.i,18).

*Overcome the anger by non-anger; overcome the wicked by goodness; overcome the miser by generosity; overcome the liar by truth. (jine kadariyam danena, Dhp. 223 [The Dhammapada admonishes us to conquer miserliness with generosity] ).*



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**The decision to donate organs and tissues relies on the individual's decision. Central to Buddhism is a wish to relieve suffering and there may be circumstances where organ donation may be seen as an act of generosity. Where it is truly the wish of the dying person, it would be seen in that light.**

**If there is doubt as to the teachings within the particular tradition to which a person belongs, expert guidance should be sought from a senior teacher within the tradition concerned.**

**We advise our members and temples to adopt this Protocol and encourage Buddhists to elect to have their organs and/or tissues donated after death is medically determined.**

*May the merits of this gift  
of the Dhamma  
be shared by all beings!*

Yours in the service of Dhamma  
with Metta,

Signed by:  
  
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